

AmeriCorps*VISTA Progress Report

Legal Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Project Name: Wisconsin DPI VISTA Project

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Grant Number: 06VSNWI009

Period Covered by this Report:

From: 07/01/2009 to 09/28/2009

Data Updates

# of VISTA Members on board at end of reporting period	20
# of Community Volunteers serving who are Baby Boomers	63
Dollar value of cash resources developed by VISTA Members	136017
# of Service Hours performed by Community Volunteers	938
Dollar value of non-cash resources developed by VISTA Members	16059
# of VISTA Members supported by cost share	0
# of Community Volunteers serving	229

Member and Sponsor Development

	Americorps *VISTA Members	Supervisors	CNCS Funded	Funded by Other Source	Comments
On-Site Orientation	20	22	Y	N	
Community Outreach	20	22	Y	N	
Community Volunteer Generation/Recruitment	20	22	Y	N	
Effective Volunteer Management	2	22	Y	N	
Resource Mapping	20	22	Y	N	
Resource Development/Fundraising	20	22	Y	N	
Grant Writing	0	0	N	N	
Organizational Development	20	12	Y	N	
Performance Measures	20	22	Y	N	
Tracking Systems	10	8	Y	N	
Information Technology	20	22	Y	N	
Developing On-Site Orientations and Training Plans	0	22	Y	N	
Other (Please Specify)	20	22	Y	N	Family Involvement, Action Team for Partnerships, Joyce Epstein District Leader Institute

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Project Plan

Service Category: Other Education

Goals

The goal is to build capacity for establishing a research-based, effective, sustainable program of family-school-community partnerships in schools serving low-income children and their families.

VISTA members will serve as facilitators to help schools to establish Action Team for Partnership (ATP). The VISTAs and ATP members will receive training and support to engage families, school staff, and others to develop a family-school-community partnership infrastructure, following a research-based approach using the Six Types of Involvement.

Service Activities

Complete training in the Action Team for Partnerships process

Conduct assets map for school community

Survey Parents and Teachers on family involvement for baseline data

With supervisor and other leaders, facilitate the establishment of ATP (must have ownership of community) and help train ATP members.

Share assets map with ATP and facilitate additional data gathering, including the Starting Points Inventory on strengths of school partnerships

Provide support for the work of the ATP to get it firmly established, beginning with the development of a one-year action plan of partnership activities and practices that address school goals and include the Six Types of Partnerships (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community).

Support the ATP in holding regular meetings and work with it to accomplish the work plan, including recruiting volunteers and participants at events and activities.

Monitor the results of the ATP.

With ATP, organize and hold end-of-year celebration

With supervisor, complete biweekly and quarterly reports to DPI.

Survey parents and staff at end of school year to compare to baseline data.

With supervisor, complete end-of-year UPDATE for the National Network of Partnership Schools.

Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
Results		
	Action Teams for Partnerships established. ATP members are trained.	
Planned Period of Accomplishment		Actual Period of Accomplishment
Q1-2		Q1-2
Indicator		
	Number of sites with Action Teams formed.	
Target # (number) or % (percent)		Actual # or % to date
100 %		40
How Measured		
	Sign-in sheet	
Description of Data Collection		
	Membership list, which includes at least 2 parents, 2 teachers, and 2 other staff.	
Progress this Reporting Period		
	40% of our sites have established new Action Teams or are working with existing Action Teams to strengthen and develop them. Our VISTA at the Indian Community School in Milwaukee and with the WEOP program in Madison are working with existing teams towards sustainability. The VISTAs in Rhinelander are working to expand the ATP process to all elementary schools in the district. Our VISTA in Wausau has established a district level ATP to implement the district wide Family University Network. We expect that each site, by the end of the service year, will have a functioning body of family members, staff and other community members that take ownership of	

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partnerships and have a significant role in decision making at the site.

Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
Results		
VISTAs map community assets and collect data on school climate.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment	Actual Period of Accomplishment	
Q1	Q1	
Indicator		
Number of community asset maps submitted to DPI.		
Target # (number) or % (percent)	Actual # or % to date	
100 %	100	
How Measured		
Community Partner Survey		
Description of Data Collection		
community asset mapping		
Progress this Reporting Period		
All VISTAs have submitted new or updated Asset Maps with their first Quarterly Report. These maps will continue to be updated and utilized throughout the service year.		

Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
Results		
VISTAs submit grants and procure in-kind donations for ATP programs and initiatives.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment	Actual Period of Accomplishment	
Q1-4	Q1-4	
Indicator		
Number of grants submitted.		
Target # (number) or % (percent)	Actual # or % to date	
20 #	3	
How Measured		
Sustainability Checklist		
Description of Data Collection		
Pre/post surveys, bi-weekly and quarterly reports, and community asset map will also be used. Twelve grants will have been written and submitted by VISTAs.		
Progress this Reporting Period		
VISTAs are mostly working on grant research at this point in their service year. However, on October 19th we held		

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our first Grant Writing webinar of the year with the district grant writer in West-Allis/West-Milwaukee. We expect more VISTAs to write and submit grants in the 1st Quarter (October 1- December 31). One VISTA received a \$1500 grant from the Alliant Energy Foundation for the development and sustainability of youth programs at the South Madison Health and Family Center-Harambee. Another VISTA, Dustin Young, and his supervisor received a \$133,000 WIRED grant to develop more community based programs and career exploration options for students at the Dane County Transition School.

Result Type	Intermediate Outcome	Performance Measure : X
Results		
Sites will implement family-school-community practices that address their school's goals to improve academic achievement.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment	Actual Period of Accomplishment	
Q1-4	Q1-4	
Indicator		
Number of activities/practices implemented.		
Target # (number) or % (percent)	Actual # or % to date	
120 #	30	
How Measured		
Activity log		
Description of Data Collection		
Action Plans and agendas of activities, as well as project descriptions, will be submitted by the VISTAs in bi-weekly and quarterly reports. Each VISTA will coordinate at least six family-school-community events or initiatives.		
Progress this Reporting Period		
VISTAs are excellent organizers and program planners. This Quarter, though many of our VISTAs have only been on board since mid-late August, sites have implemented 30 partnership activities. Mark Mentele and Stephanie Dorman facilitated Parent Nights at each of their three point schools in West Allis. These events helped low income parents get better connected to their student's teachers and curriculum. They also had the opportunity to gather critical resources to reinforce learning at home. Cara Slingerland at SUPAR in Milwaukee is working to develop a FAST (Families and Schools Together) program for parents and school staff so that parents and teachers can engage in conversations on student success for a sustained period of time.		

Result Type	End Outcome	Performance Measure : X
Results		
Schools will have an identified process for partnerships that includes the Action Team for Partnerships.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment	Actual Period of Accomplishment	
end of school year	end of school year	
Indicator		
Percent of Action Teams that have started work on next year action plan.		
Target # (number) or % (percent)	Actual # or % to date	

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How Measured 0
NA

Description of Data Collection

By end of year, all sites will have started plans for next year. Instrument: Year-end UPDATE form completed and returned to the DPI and the NNPS for analysis.

Progress this Reporting Period

UPDATE data will not be available until June so we will report further in the 3rd Quarter.

Result Type	End Outcome	Performance Measure : X
Results		
More parents will feel welcome in their children's school, have an understanding of the importance of being involved in their children's learning, and know how to participate to help their children.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment	Actual Period of Accomplishment	
school year	school year	
Indicator		
Increase in the percent of parents indicating positive attitudes on end of year survey		
Target # (number) or % (percent)	Actual # or % to date	
20 %	0	
How Measured		
Pre/Post test		
Description of Data Collection		
VISTAs will randomly survey at least 25 parents at the beginning of the school year with a base-line survey and then again at the end of the school year.		
Progress this Reporting Period		
At this point, all VISTAs have collected base line data from families on their level of comfort and involvement with their child's school. At the end of the school year (June) we will be able to report on the percentage of parents indicating positive attitudes regarding the school.		

Narratives

Challenges

Our primary challenge for this past quarter has been our work with Milwaukee Public Schools. We currently have five VISTAs members working with Parents Plus in Milwaukee, at various schools and sites. However, we are partnering with MPS on a district level to build and sustain family partnerships. This new partnership has created some challenge for us in terms of the VISTA role in district level partnerships. We want VISTAs to be part of district wide change, but we want to ensure that they are building capacity and sustainability for the district in a meaningful way.

We have partnered with the Title One Director and Director of the Department of Student Services to help us shape the vision for VISTA involvement at MPS. Additionally our Project Director's involvement with the MPS DiFi plan has helped us maintain excellent communication with MPS staff and our VISTAs.

Currently our VISTAs are partnering with staff at each of 9 clusters to help organize training for schools in the Action Team for Partnerships model.

Additionally, we are working with the new District Parent Involvement Coordinator to place a VISTA with her starting in November. This VISTA can do research on best practices and share with the district. This VISTA will also help to support the Title One district advisory council.

Recruitment

We were able to recruit two new VISTAs to begin with our project in late November, Casey Burns and Ellen Carpenter. These VISTAs will be placed with:

Parents Plus/Milwaukee Public Schools
Madison School District

Thanks to the outreach and recruitment efforts of our VISTA Leader, we found two excellent candidates to join our project. We are confident they will increase the capacity of our program to reach more low income families.

Recruitment was done primarily through online job boards, facebook, craig's list, and attending job fairs in Milwaukee, Madison and Beloit.

Training/Technical Assistance Needs

VISTAs requested training and technical assistance in the following areas this quarter:

Grant Writing
Asset Mapping
Working with the Media

We were able to meet these requests through webinars, newsletters and our Orientation in September. We have learned that offering the grant writing webinar earlier in the service year would be more useful to VISTA members. Additionally, because so many of our VISTAs are working with local media organizations, we plan to schedule our Working with the Media webinar early in the 1st quarter.

Partnership/Collaboration Development

Due to the success of our Summer VISTA Associate program, we were able to expand our list of community partners throughout the state. We collaborated with more libraries, schools, and community agencies than ever before. In fact, several of our summer sites now work with year round VISTAs to continue building that capacity in their communities including Urban Day School in Milwaukee, the Vaughn Public Library in Ashland, the Madison Public Library, the South Madison Health and Family Center, and Parents Plus.

Throughout this quarter we were also working to strengthen our relationship with other VISTA and AmeriCorps programs across the state. Both the Project Coordinator and VISTA Leader Penny Bruskin presented at the WI VISTA In Service Training in mid October. Additionally, our VISTA Leader is working with Milwaukee area national service groups to organize a Summit to bring all service agencies together to find ways to connect and work better together. We are excited to be a part of this project.

Narratives

Additionally, we partnered with Serve Wisconsin on the organizing and implementing of five regional State Service plan meetings, to gather input into Wisconsin's state service plan, scheduled to be submitted this November.

Finally, we are continually working to partner with the AmeriCorps project here at DPI through joint Orientation sessions and Regional Meetings. This partnership has allowed our members to connect on local projects and efforts.

Resource Development

This has been a successful quarter for us in terms of resource development, despite recent economic crisis. Our VISTAs have secured cash and non cash donations for their sites through fundraising, solicitation, and forming solid business partnerships.

Most notably this quarter, Dustin Young, serving at the Dane County Transition School, was integral to the writing and submitting of a national WIRED grant for \$133,000. This grant will help the school develop more community based programming as well as career exploration. Dustin will be working with his supervisor and members of his Action Team to implement critical pieces of this grant.

Additionally, both Nicole Stachurski and Robyn Krimke were able to secure thousands of dollars of in-kind donations for their sites (Grove Elementary, WI Rapids and Grant Elementary, Milwaukee respectively). Nicole organized a Computer giveaway for low income families at Grove Elementary; securing donations from the old computer lab and enabling families computer and internet access at home. These computers were worth over \$3,000.

Robyn Krimke's partnership with North Shore bank not only provided financial literacy programming to families at Grant school, it also generated almost \$2,000 for the school. North Shore bank donated funds to the school for every bank account that staff and families opened. In addition, they opened a "branch" on site at Grant School for families and staff to deposit and withdraw money weekly. Resources and financial education are just one piece to this ongoing partnership.

Sustainability

Sustainability is an ongoing training topic with all of our VISTAs and Supervisors. At our Orientation in September, we were able to engage in conversation with all participants about the importance of building sustainable structures and programs into their work.

Also, we added a section to our bi-weekly and quarterly reporting forms that ask how VISTAs are addressing sustainability on an ongoing basis. This has allowed us to monitor the kinds of challenges and successes VISTAs are having with sustaining their work. VISTAs are addressing this through recruiting volunteers, establishing action teams/advisory boards, and writing grants, primarily. Many are also working to connect with other community groups with similar purposes and vision. This has been a successful strategy. For instance, VISTAs are encouraged to work closely with PTAs, PTOs and PTCs at their sites in order to develop buy-in and build capacity for family partnerships.

Finally, we feel that in terms of sustainability of the project, the approval to hire a Project Coordinator project position at DPI will be beneficial. This position will be shared with the Learn and Serve program but will allow for one FTE for up to three years.

Multi-Site Performance

In order for us to acknowledge VISTAs' success and reinforce it, we need effective tools of assessment and communication.

We communicate with the VISTA members in the following ways:

- Bi-Weekly Reports
- Quarterly Reports
- Written feedback on all reports
- VISTA Blog
- DPI VISTA Project Google Site
- Monthly Teleconferences/Webinars
- VISTA Project List-serv
- Monthly Newsletters
- Check-in phone calls/emails from Project Coordinator and VISTA Leaders every two weeks

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Site Visits

We communicate with the VISTA Supervisors in the following ways:

- Bi-Weekly Reports
- Quarterly Reports
- Written feedback on all reports
- DPI VISTA Project Google Site
- Bi-monthly Teleconferences
- VISTA Project List-serv
- Monthly Newsletters (featuring a Supervisor Segment)
- Check-in phone calls/emails from Project Coordinator
- Site Visits

Other Accomplishments

We were thrilled to learn that three VISTAs who finished their service with us in August were hired by VISTA sites as full time staff. Roxane Hagedorn was hired by the Wausau School District as the Volunteer Coordinator, Kelly Karls at the Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center was hired as the Program Coordinator, and Kim Yoder, at the Business and Economics Academy of Milwaukee, was hired as a kindergarten teacher. We know that having these former VISTAs continue to work at their service sites will help ensure sustainability.

The program is off to another excellent start this quarter, this is due in large part to the leadership and collaboration of our two VISTA Leaders- Penny Bruskin and Casey Gauthier. They have been excellent resources to all VISTAs and have enabled us to expand our capacity to support VISTAs and supervisors.

One big accomplishment of the project is the creation and development of our Google site, which helps members keep in touch with one another, allows them to share calendars and events, and enables us to post resources and tools for use during their service. This site is user owned; all members can post and upload documents, materials, and resources to share with the other VISTAs. This tool has increased the capacity of our project tremendously and we hope it will continue to be of use to VISTAs throughout the year and in years to come. Please see the attachments section of this report for a direct link to our public Google Site.

Finally, our Orientation and Training for all members and supervisors was a success. Held on September 9th and 10th, we were able to provide training on asset based community development, family partnerships and action teams. Additionally, we provided multiple ways for members and supervisors to collaborate and network. This training was done in collaboration with DPI's AmeriCorps program.

Stories

VISTA: Abby Churchill

Site: South Madison Health and Family Center-Harambee

Abby Churchill is in the process of partnering with Jennifer Lord, Pre College Specialist at UW-Madison on a gardening project with Wright Middle School in south Madison. Abby is looking to pair up with an Agriculture professor at UW to offer more services to youth through pre-college initiatives and help link the gardening program with learning. Abby has met with the professor and principal at Wright Middle School to discuss the possibility of a free Saturday School and even a free summer program for students and families. Abby has been working on gathering information about gardening curriculums and ideas on gardening and nutrition, so that the professor and those teaching the sessions would have information already available to them.

VISTA: Stephanie Dorman

Site: West Allis-West Milwaukee School District

Stephanie Dorman has been recruiting parents for Preparing for School Success, a parent program at the Longfellow Elementary School. This program allows parents of elementary children and teacher facilitators to meet once a week for four weeks to discuss ways to help their kids be successful in school. At the first Preparing for School Success meeting, parents discussed with the facilitators the important role that parents play in education, how to create a learning environment and transition routine at home, and strategies for helping kids with ADHD. At the second and third meetings, facilitators and

Narratives

parents discussed ways to communicate with children and teachers, as well as reading strategies to use at home.

VISTA: Anna Morgen

Site: School District of Rhinelander

Anna Morgen has been working on strengthening a pre-existing partnership with the local library. The children's librarian at the Rhinelander District Library was recently invited into Kindergarten and 4K classrooms to read stories to children, talk to them about what's available at the library, and have them sign up for library cards. Teachers chose the best time for the librarian to attend, and Anna worked on creating the schedule for all those involved. This partnership will help enhance literacy skills for the whole family and encourage local families to take advantage of free services the library offers.

VISTA: Dustin Young

Site: Dane County Transition School

Dustin Young has recently created a strong partnership with Habitat for Humanity, which gives students the opportunity to serve their community while also learning about teamwork, leadership, and other valuable life skills. The feedback received from Habitat for Humanity has been extremely encouraging for future prospects, as they have been thrilled with the enthusiasm that the students have brought to the project. This collaboration has great potential to act as a building block toward family-school-community partnerships because families are integrated into the activities and students prove that they can handle the work. This partnership can also easily be integrated into the curriculum and career-focused nature of the school.

Attachments and Links

July Newsletter

<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/vnwsltr07-09.pdf>

August Newsletter

<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/vnwsltr08-09.pdf>

September Newsletter

<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/vnwsltr09-09.pdf>

Compiled Quarterly Reports from our VISTA members will be emailed to our Program Officer.

All other attachments, press coverage, and tools created can be accessed through our Project's Google Site:

<http://sites.google.com/site/dpivistaproject/>